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Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the thirty-eighth submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2191 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2258 (2015) and paragraph 5 of resolution 2332 (2016), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on the data available to United Nations agencies on the ground and from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other Syrian and open sources. Data from United Nations agencies on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for the period from 1 to 31 March 2017.

Box 1
Key points in March 2017

(1) Rounds four and five of the United Nations-facilitated political negotiations in Geneva were concluded in March. The rounds ended with a clear agenda and a greater understanding of the points of commonality and divergence.

(2) Notwithstanding the ceasefire declared as at 30 December 2016, fighting in multiple areas resulted in further civilian deaths and injury and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

(3) The situation in eastern Ghutah in Rif Dimashq, where hundreds of thousands of people are besieged in a number of towns and surrounding rural areas, and adjacent neighbourhoods of Qabun, Barzah and Tishrin deteriorated further amid reports of shelling, air strikes and heavy ground fighting.

(4) Close to 100,000 people were displaced as a result of fighting and insecurity in several governorates. The United Nations and non-governmental organization partners mobilized a multisector response to those displaced.

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(5) Some 6,800 people were evacuated from the besieged neighbourhood of Wa'r in Homs to Jarabulus in rural Aleppo and locations in Idlib as part of a local agreement between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and local representatives in Wa'r. The United Nations was not involved in the negotiation or evacuation process.

(6) Overall, some 440,000 people were reached through inter-agency operations, including through eight inter-agency convoys to besieged and hard-to-reach locations, on-going airdrops to besieged Dayr al-Zawr city and through the airlift link from Damascus to Qamishlii, given access challenges overland. More inter-agency convoys deployed in March, compared with the past several months, notwithstanding ongoing access challenges.

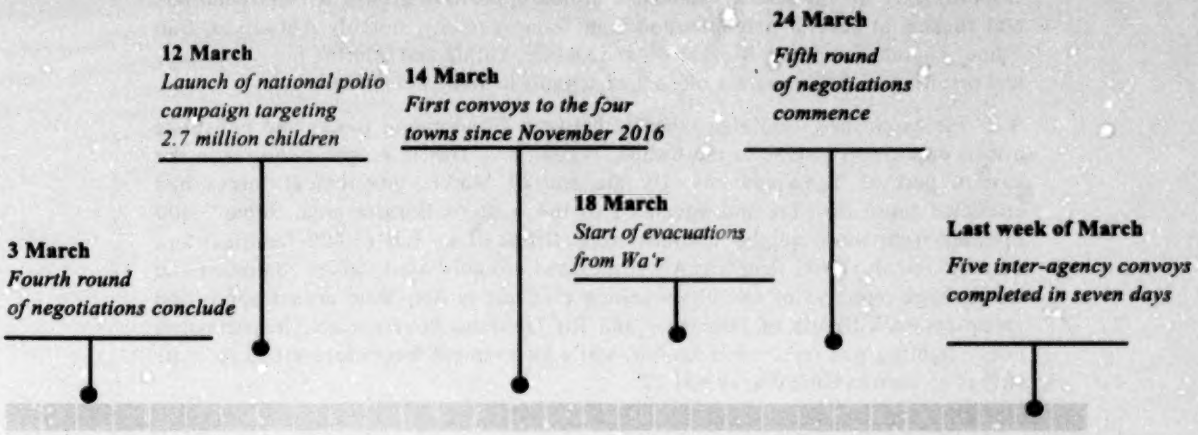
(7) Syrian authorities approved a total 764,950 of the 1,066,650 requested beneficiaries (71.7 per cent) under the April/May convoy plan. Six locations with more than 132,000 people in need were denied. Some 168,000 people were approved in locations where the approved total was less than the United Nations request.

II. Major developments

3. The month of March witnessed consecutive rounds of United Nations-facilitated political negotiations in Geneva. The fourth round of negotiations, which concluded on 3 March, was the first set of political negotiations in 10 months. Invitees engaged constructively in increasingly intensive discussions on procedure and substance with my Special Envoy and his team. A clear agenda emerged and invitees agreed to receive a non-paper on principles, expert presentations on issues in the four baskets of governance and a schedule and process for drafting a new constitution, free and fair elections and counter-terrorism, security governance and confidence-building measures. This round also saw continued engagement with civil society, including the Special Envoy's Syrian Women's Advisory Board.

4. In preparation for the fifth round of negotiations, held in the latter part of March, my Special Envoy and his team undertook consultations in Moscow, Riyadh and Ankara to seek advice on and support for the substantive discussions that were necessary to build on progress made to date. At the ministerial meeting of the League of Arab States, held in Jordan, my Special Envoy repeated his hope that intra-Syrian negotiations would lead to a framework agreement containing a political package so that a negotiated transitional political process could be implemented in accordance with the clear sequencing and target timelines set out in Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué of June 2012 that was endorsed in resolution 2118 (2013).

Figure I
Key dates in March 2017


3 March
Fourth round of negotiations conclude
12 March
Launch of national polio campaign targeting 2.7 million children
14 March
First convoys to the four towns since November 2016
18 March
Start of evacuations from Wa'r
24 March
Fifth round of negotiations commence
Last week of March
Five inter-agency convoys completed in seven days

5. The fifth round of United Nations-facilitated political negotiations commenced on 24 March in the presence of all invitees and the participation of the Syrian Women's Advisory Board. Invitees engaged in considerable detail on the substance of that agenda, utilizing the methodology established by my Special Envoy and his team. This round was marked by a willingness by invitees to present both oral and written observations, resulting in a greater understanding of the points of commonality and divergence.

6. The Russian Federation and Turkey, as the guarantors of the ceasefire of 30 December 2016, convened in Astana again on 14 and 15 March. A decision was taken to expand the guarantor role to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The guarantors reaffirmed their commitment to the consolidation and strengthening of the ceasefire regime and emphasized the need to improve conditions on the ground through stronger enforcement of it. They initiated discussions on international assistance for the demining of World Heritage Sites of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the Syrian Arab Republic and on confidence-building measures. Lastly, they welcomed the resumption of political negotiations in Geneva and underlined the importance of the Astana meetings to complement and facilitate the Geneva process. It was agreed that the next high-level meeting would be held in Astana on 3 and 4 May, with preliminary expert consultations in Tehran on 18 and 19 April.

7. Both rounds of intra-Syrian negotiations were convened in an atmosphere of increased militarization on the ground, notwithstanding the ceasefire declared. Military operations between the parties continued in parts of Aleppo, Damascus, Dar'a, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Idlib, Ladhiqiyah, Homs, Raqqah, Rif Dimashq and Suwayda' governorates. Such operations continued to result in death, injury and displacement to civilians and damage and destruction to civilian infrastructure.

8. Damascus and its suburbs located in Rif Dimashq governorate witnessed a sharp increase in violence, resulting in the death of and injuries to civilians. Air strikes and ground-based strikes, along with suicide bombings, contributed to a high civilian death toll. On 11 and 15 March, a series of attacks hit civilian areas in central Damascus, including the central court complex and a restaurant, apparently aimed at causing a high number of civilian casualties. On 11 March, a twin suicide attack on buses in the Shaghour neighbourhood caused dozens of fatalities and more

then 100 injuries. The Levant Liberation Organization (Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham), a group that includes Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, formerly the Nusrah Front, claimed responsibility for the attack. Non-State armed opposition groups launched mortars and rockets at several neighbourhoods in Damascus city, notably Abbasiyin, Bab Tuma, Tijarah, Zablatani, Mazzah 86 and Qassa', killing and injuring many civilians and resulting in the temporary closure of schools in some neighbourhoods.

9. Fierce clashes were also reported between Government forces and non-State armed opposition groups in the Qabun, Barzah and Tishrin neighbourhoods in the eastern part of Damascus city. By the end of March, government forces had encircled those districts and advanced to the western Harasta area. Some 3,400 families from those neighbourhoods were displaced to Tall (1,500 families) and eastern Ghutah (1,900 families).Air strikes and ground-based strikes continued and led to large numbers of casualties among civilians in non-State armed opposition group-controlled parts of Damascus and Rif Dimashq governorates. In particular, heavy fighting was reported in Jawbar, while government forces intensified their air strikes on eastern Ghutah (see box 2).

Box 2
Eastern Ghutah

(1) The situation in eastern Ghutah (Rif Dimashq), where hundreds of thousands of people are besieged in a number of towns and surrounding rural areas, deteriorated amid reports of shelling, air strikes and ground fighting on a near daily basis, causing a significant number of civilian deaths and injuries and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. At the same time, shelling from eastern Ghutah into residential neighbourhoods in Damascus city was reported widely.

(2) Since 20 March, government forces have reportedly have prevented commercial trucks from entering eastern Ghutah, resulting in price hikes of basic staples, while informal trade has been curtailed. Exports of agricultural products from East Ghutah to Damascus, which were authorized on a case-by-case basis, have also stopped.

(3) The last United Nations humanitarian delivery to any of the besieged areas of eastern Ghutah was in October 2016, with other areas not accessed since June 2016. Recent approval to reach the area could not be acted upon owing to the security situation and a lack of facilitation letters, although the Syrian Arab Red Crescent was able to deliver a portion of the health supplies planned for the convoy on 9 March, including 250 dialysis kits, vaccines and baby milk, to its sub-branch in Duma.

(4) According to the World Health Organization, none of the three public hospitals and 17 public health care centres in eastern Ghutah are functioning or accessible to the population, with several of them reportedly destroyed by air strikes. Some facilities are reportedly still operational elsewhere in the enclave. The number of children suffering from traumatic injuries is alarmingly high: 30 per cent of all patients with war-related injuries are children under 15 years of age. The death of patients due to lack of dialysis equipment and a measles outbreak has also been reported. Schools in East Ghutah are open, although hours are shorter than usual owing to security concerns.

10. In southern Damascus city, clashes were reported between pro-government forces and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Tishrin street in al-Yarmouk camp amid mutual artillery bombardment early in March.

11. The situation in the besieged areas of Madaya and Zabadani was marked by intensified and near-daily ground-based strikes launched by government forces and allied militias, primarily Hezbollah. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received numerous reports of incidents involving snipers shooting and reportedly killing and injuring civilians, including children. The humanitarian situation remained precarious and reports received indicated that many people were in need of urgent medical evacuation. Attacks and sniping by non-State armed opposition groups were also reported in the besieged towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib, leading to multiple deaths of and injuries to civilians. On 14 March, a convoy of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent reached the four towns of Zabadani, Madaya, Fu'ah and Kafraya for the first time since November 2016. The United Nations was unable to distribute all the delivered assistance in Madaya owing to sniping by the surrounding militias that left several people dead. Meanwhile, at the end of March, the United Nations received reports of an agreement between parties to the Four Towns Agreement to evacuate people from the four towns.

12. Idlib governorate witnessed an increase in the number of reported civilian casualties, including women and children, as a result of the reported intensification of air strikes that, in particular, affected the south of the governorate. In addition, clashes erupted between Ahrar al-Sham and the Levant Liberation Organization in several locations around Mastumah early in March. However, a ceasefire deal was reportedly reached on 7 March, which brought an end to that episode of fighting. In addition, OHCHR continued to receive reports of repressive measures taken by non-State armed opposition groups and the Levant Liberation Organization in Idlib, limiting the rights to freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

13. Fighting continued in several areas of Aleppo governorate, displacing tens of thousands of people. In the north-eastern countryside of Aleppo, clashes were reported between ISIL and the Syrian Democratic Forces led by People's Protection Units on several fronts. The Forces captured ISIL locations to the south of Manbij and, between 5 and 8 March, handed over several villages to government forces. Fighting in eastern rural Aleppo between government forces and ISIL forced the displacement of thousands of families, who consequently sought refuge in Jarabulus, Manbij city and surrounding areas, as well as Aleppo city. Government forces and their allies captured the ISIL-controlled town of Khafsah town in Manbij district and, with it, the main water pumping station, allowing for the restoration of the water supply to Aleppo. In areas held by the Turkish-led Operation Euphrates Shield forces in and around Bab and those held by the Syrian Democratic Forces in the vicinity of Manbij, several civilians were killed and injured by explosive devices, such as improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordinances. On 29 March, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Binali Yildirim, announced the end of Operation Euphrates Shield.

14. By the end of March, the Syrian Democratic Forces had gained control of most of the villages and towns north of Raqqah governorate, closing in on Raqqah city. To date, tens of thousands of people have been displaced as a result of the three phases of the Operation Euphrates Shield , including some 20,000 people in March. Most displacements remain temporary and most occur to nearby communities, with people gradually returning once the security situation has improved. Civilian infrastructure was also affected by air strikes in various locations in Raqqah. In particular, fears over the integrity of the Tabaqah dam emerged after reports of an air strike that had struck the dam's control rooms. Repairs made by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the Aleppo drinking water authority and Tabaqah dam administration

technicians in early April, however, significantly reduced the threat of the dam collapsing.

15. Air strikes on the ISIL-controlled parts of Raqqah reportedly increased significantly, leading to a number of alleged civilian casualties, including many women and children. For example, on 21 March, air strikes reportedly hit the al-Badiya school in Mansoura town in western rural Raqqah governorate, resulting in the death of at least 46 civilians, including women and children, and injuries to scores of others who were among the internally displaced persons living at the school. On 22 March, air strikes reportedly hit a bakery and a local market in Tabaqah town, resulting in the death of at least 37 civilians, including 5 women and 2 children, and injuries to 52 others. ISIL reportedly prevented civilians from leaving areas under its control.

16. In Dayr al-Zawr governorate, the Syrian Democratic Forces advanced in the northern countryside after fierce clashes with ISIL, seizing several villages, and cut the main highway between Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr cities as part of the third phase of the Operation Euphrates Shield aimed at cutting communications between Raqqah city and Dayr al-Zawr and further advancing towards Raqqah. Elsewhere, fierce clashes were reported between ISIL and government forces in and around besieged Dayr al-Zawr city amid heavy mutual artillery bombardment and Government air strikes. On 9 and 13 March, government forces repelled several ISIL attacks around the military airport south of the city.

17. Fighting and insecurity persisted in parts of Homs governorate. In the eastern countryside of Homs, government forces, backed by air strikes, seized Tadmur (Palmyra) city and a large surrounding area from ISIL in the early part of the month. The situation in Homs city remained tense following two improvised explosive device explosions, including one on a public transportation bus in Wadi al-Dahab that killed 10 people and injured many more. In Wa'r, an agreement was reached and implemented mid-month between non-State armed opposition groups and the Government, accompanied by guarantees provided by the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic in Humaymim. More than 6,800 people in total were evacuated from Wa'r between 18 March and 8 April to Jarabulus in rural northern Aleppo and to areas in Idlib governorate. Cross-border humanitarian partners have been providing a response to those who arrived from Wa'r to the extent possible, given the dire humanitarian situation of the evacuees. The United Nations was neither part of the agreement nor the evacuation. As part of the agreement, government forces reopened one of the roads connecting Wa'r neighbourhood with the rest of Homs city, and food items are now entering the neighbourhood without hindrance. Electricity has been restored. Freedom of movement for students and government employees has also been restored.

18. In Hama governorate, clashes between ISIL and government forces in the eastern countryside were reported during the first half of March. In the latter half of the month, non-State armed opposition groups, as well as the Levan Liberation Organization, launched multiple offensives in rural Hama, capturing more than 10 villages and towns, in addition to several military positions from government forces. In the same period, government forces launched several counterattacks and, by the end to the reporting period, had recaptured the majority of the area. Some 60,000 people fled their homes as a result of fighting in the governorate towards safer areas in Hama, Idlib, Homs, Tartus and Ladhiqiyah governorates, where humanitarian partners mobilized a response. By mid-April, an estimated 50 per cent of the displaced were able to return to their homes.

19. Fighting was reported in various parts of Dar'a governorate. Government forces and non-State armed opposition groups engaged in fierce clashes in Dar'a

city, including air strikes and ground-based strikes. Civilians and civilian infrastructure were affected. For example, on 22 March, the Safsaf school of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Dera'a camp was hit by a mortar. One classroom was damaged. Fighting erupted between non-State armed opposition groups and ISIL-affiliated armed groups in Yarmouk valley in south-western rural Dar'a a and continued throughout March, forcing more than 2,000 people to flee to nearby villages in Dar'a and parts of Qunaytirah. Fighting was also reported in the eastern countryside of Dar'a when non-State armed opposition groups took control of the entire area of Alaghwat after the withdrawal of ISIL from the area on 24 March.

20. There were relevant developments in other governorates. For example, Suwayda' on 22 March, the villages of Anz, Sahwat al-Khidr, and Dayr al-Laban in Suwayda' governorate reportedly signed a ceasefire and settlement agreement with government forces. As with other such arrangements, the United Nations was not part of the agreement. Meanwhile, non-State armed opposition groups reportedly took control of all hitherto ISIL-controlled locations in the eastern countryside of Suwayda' by the end of March, leaving ISIL without a presence in the governorate. In Ladhiqiyah' governorate, there was fighting between non-State armed opposition groups and government forces in the northern countryside, including air strikes in Jabal al-Akrad and Jabal at-Turkuman areas. Non-State armed opposition groups reportedly targeted Humaymim airport and Qardahah city with missiles.

Protection

21. Air strikes and ground-based strikes continued to kill and injure civilians in significant numbers. The high level of civilian casualties is a strong indication that violations of the prohibition on the launching of indiscriminate attacks and of the principles of proportionality and precautions in and against the effects of attack continued. The fighting continued to affect civilian infrastructure personnel and objects, including medical personnel and facilities, and schools, education staff and school children. Based on information received by OHCHR, civilian casualties in suspected violation of the laws of armed conflict occurred in various governorates (see annex). OHCHR documented alleged incidents by all parties to the conflict, including Government forces and their allies, non-State armed opposition groups and Security Council-designated terrorist groups.

22. The Department of Defense of the United States publicly confirmed that, in March, the international coalition to counter ISIL carried out 425 strikes against the purported ISIL targets in the governorates of Aleppo, Dayr al-Zawr, Hasakah, Raqqah and Homs. More than half the strikes were in and around Raqqah.

23. The Russian Federation continued to provide air support to government forces and their allies. On 10 March, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation stated that, in the previous week, Aerospace Defence Forces had conducted 452 strikes on ISIL targets in eastern Aleppo. On 28 March, the Ministry stated that its forces were continuing their provision of support to Syrian government forces both in responding to the opposition offensive in Hama and against ISIL targets.

24. As part of Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkish air and ground forces continued to support non-State armed opposition groups fighting under the Free Syrian Army banner in operations against ISIL, with the reported aim of improving security and eliminating threats along Turkey's border with the Syrian Arab Republic.

25. The United Nations and health partners received credible reports of 19 attacks that affected medical facilities. Those included documented attacks on the national laboratory in Damascus, two hospitals in Hama, one hospital in Idlib, one hospital

in Raqqah, one hospital in Dar'a and one advanced medical point in Hama. In addition, one paramedic health worker was killed and one injured in Dar'a. All hospitals attacked were temporarily rendered out of service, except the hospital in Dar'a, which remained functional.

26. Educational facilities continued to be affected. The United Nations received credible information of the following attacks to education facilities and related protected personnel. On 9 March, the Abo Baker Seddeeq school in Darat Izzah, Aleppo governorate, was reportedly hit by an air strike, resulting in the deaths of 7 children and injuries to 10 others who were playing in the school playground at the time of the attack. The school was reportedly seriously damaged. On 9 March, the Fadel Khateeb school in Kafr Nubl, Idlib governorate, was reportedly hit by two air strikes. According to preliminary reports, high-explosive missiles hit the facility directly, which is the biggest school in the area, with 1,450 students enrolled. No casualties were reported, given that the school was closed for the weekend on the day of the attack.

Humanitarian access

Box 3
Key points

(1) Eight inter-agency convoys to besieged and hard-to-reach locations were carried out, including to the besieged four towns, Khan al-Shih in Rif Dimashq and the hard-to-reach locations of Talbisah and Rastan in northern rural Homs and Wadi Barada and Bludan in Rif Dimashq.

(2) A number of other inter-agency convoys to besieged and hard-to-reach areas could not proceed owing to a lack of approval or of facilitation letters by the Syrian authorities, fighting and insecurity and delays to and restrictions on administrative procedures after receiving original approvals. As a result, the United Nations reached some 307,000 people, or 39 per cent, of the initial target under the March inter-agency convoy plan.

(3) The April/May inter-agency convoy plan to besieged and hard-to-reach locations was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 19 March. A total 764,950 of the 1,066,650 requested beneficiaries, or 71.7 per cent, were approved on 30 March. Six locations with an estimated population of 132,000 were denied. The remaining 168,000 people were approved in locations where the approved total was less than the United Nations request.

(4) The removal of medical supplies from convoys remains a major challenge, with some 36,000 medical treatments and supplies removed from convoys.

(5) Some 700,000 beneficiaries were assisted with food commodities by the United Nations and its partners via cross-border operations from Jordan and Turkey, while 93,500 people were supported in besieged Dayr al-Zawr through airdrops and 23,000 beneficiaries were reached through the airlift link from Damascus to Qamishli, given the access challenges overland.

27. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need remained extremely challenging in many areas of the country as a result of active conflict, shifting conflict lines, administrative impediments and deliberate restrictions on the movement of people and goods by the parties to the conflict.

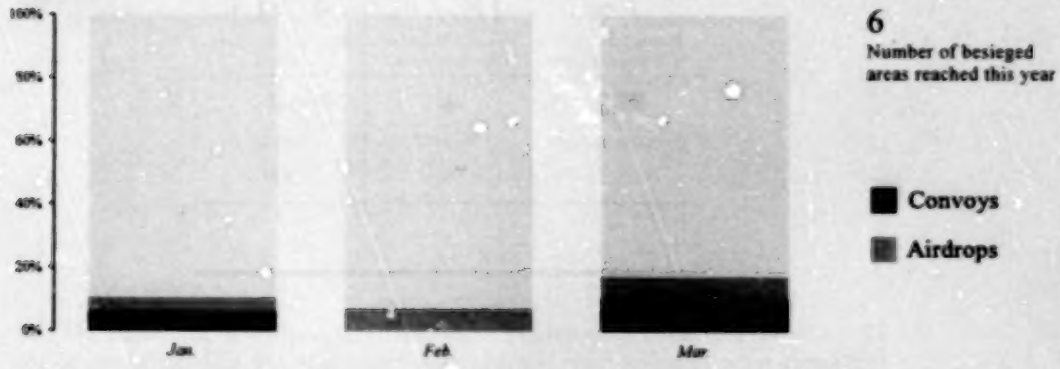
28. Access to the millions of people living in besieged and hard-to-reach locations remained of critical concern. Eight inter-agency convoys to besieged and hard-to-

reach locations were carried out, including to the besieged four towns and Khan al-Shih in Rif Dimashq. Convoys also reached the hard-to-reach locations of Talbisah and Rastan in northern rural Homs and Wadi Barada, and Bludan in Rif Dimashq. Convoys to other besieged and hard-to-reach areas, including those approved under the March inter-agency convoy plan, were unable to proceed as a result of fighting and insecurity, administrative delays by the Syrian authorities and restrictions applied by non-State armed opposition groups.

29. United Nations agencies also undertook single-agency deliveries to cross-line and hard-to-reach locations or reached those locations through their regular programmes. Moreover, NGOs, both international and Syrian, continued to provide medical, education, psychosocial and protection services, as well as some support in other sectors, in hard-to-reach locations under extremely challenging circumstances.

Figure II

United Nations inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations: percentage of people reached each month in besieged areas, including via airdrops to Dayr al-Zawr city

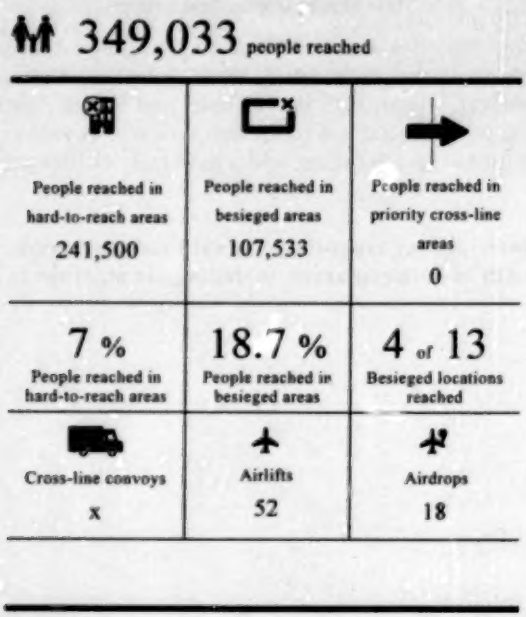


30. A combination of insecurity, deliberate interference and restrictions by the parties to the conflict continued to prevent aid delivery. For example, the majority of United Nations agencies and their partners continue to be unable to access populations in need in ISIL-controlled areas of the country, given that all plans to deliver assistance to those areas have been suspended owing to the inability to work independently and monitor activities. This is preventing the United Nations and its humanitarian partners from reaching Raqqah and most of Dayr al-Zawr governorates, as well as pockets of northern rural Aleppo, southern rural Hasakah and north-western rural Hama. The cross-border humanitarian operation through the Ramtha crossing point remained suspended during the first week of March owing to the deterioration of the security situation in Dar'a governorate, although it was subsequently restored on 9 March. During the last few weeks in March, security incidents escalated on the Salamiyah road, which is the main road to Aleppo city, hampering humanitarian deliveries there.

31. Restrictions continue by non-State armed opposition groups and other local actors. For example, humanitarian organizations have reported challenges in obtaining formal approvals from the local authorities in Kurdish-controlled areas of north-eastern Syria, causing delays to programming. Humanitarian access for the Turkey-based cross-border partners into Idlib governorate is also reportedly facing more challenges, given that non-State armed opposition groups and Security Council-designated terrorist groups are enforcing more restrictions on NGOs

operating in the governorate, including those relating to new registration demands and requests for information and interference in staffing, logistics and finances.

Figure III
United Nations inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations, March 2017



32. Life-saving and life-sustaining medical items sufficient for nearly 36,000 treatments were removed from convoys. The treatments and supplies removed are shown in table 1. Serum drugs, renewable items (razors, scalpels blades, gauzes) and surgical equipment (forceps, scissors, needles) are consistently removed by government security bodies from midwifery kits, inter-agency emergency health kits, paediatric kits and diarrheal disease sets in inter-agency and single agency convoys, therefore hampering their functionality and causing severe deprivation to the beneficiaries. This does not include medical supplies that were scheduled to be delivered as part of the monthly inter-agency convoy plan but were unable to proceed. Furthermore, since the beginning of 2017, the World Health Organization has submitted seven single-agency requests to the Government to gain access to 14 locations in five governorates. The Government approved two requests, while five remain unanswered.

Table 1
Medical supplies removed from humanitarian convoys, March 2017

Location	*Number of treatments*	*Type of supplies*
Fu'ah and Kafraya	9 709	Serum drugs, renewable items and surgical equipment were removed from inter-agency emergency health kits and diarrheal kits. Medical consumables from burn kits and pneumonia kit B were reduced in quantity/removed.
Madaya	16 143	Serum drugs, renewable items and surgical equipment were removed from inter-agency emergency health kits and diarrheal kits,. Medical consumables from burn kits and pneumonia kit B were reduced in quantity/removed. Antiseptics from basic inter-agency emergency health kits were removed.
Zabadani	3 218	Minor surgical instruments from surgical kits and medical consumables from burn kits and pneumonia kit B were reduced in quantity/removed. Antiseptics from basic inter-agency emergency health kits were removed.
Talbisah	2 837	Inter-agency emergency health kits, diarrheal disease sets, resuscitation kits and midwifery kits were not allowed to be delivered and nutrition supplies were reduced in quantity.
Rastan	4 178	inter-agency emergency health kits, diarrheal disease sets, resuscitation kits, midwifery kits and family hygiene kits were not allowed to be delivered.

33. The United Nations inter-agency convoy plan for March requested access to 21 locations, including besieged locations, in order to reach 787,500 people. The initial response from the Government included approvals for 44 per cent of the requested plan, or 348,200 people, the lowest approval rate since March 2016, when the monthly plan process began. That total, however, increased to some 74 per cent later in March, when additional approvals for some other locations were received following intense engagement by the United Nations team on the ground. Overall, the United Nations reached some 307,000 people against the plan, or 39 per cent. Others were not reached owing to non-approval by the Syrian authorities at the outset, insecurity and fighting and delays in the issuance of facilitation letters in some instances.

34. On 19 March, the United Nations submitted an inter-agency convoy plan covering April and May. The rationale for submitting a plan for two months at a time is to allow for more flexibility. The plan included a request to reach 1,066,650 people in need across 28 besieged and hard-to-reach locations. On 30 March, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs transmitted the High Relief Committee's approvals for the March inter-agency convoy plan. A total 764,950 of the 1,066,650 requested beneficiaries, or 71.7 per cent, were approved. Nine locations were approved in full, while 13 locations were approved with conditions in the number of people who are permitted to be reached. Six locations comprising more than 132,000 people were denied. The United Nations continues to engage the Syrian authorities in finding a way to improve the inter-agency convoy process.

35. Individual agencies continued to submit requests for single-agency convoys. For example, the World Food Programme (WFP) submitted 1,820 official requests to obtain facilitation letters to transport food assistance to targeted locations across the country, the vast majority of which are regularly accessible areas. Of those, 16 requests did not receive approval or a response from the relevant authorities, thus preventing the delivery of food assistance to 68,525 people in Homs, Dar'a and Rif Dimashq governorates.

36. The Nusaybin/Qamishli crossing in Hasakah governorate has been temporarily closed by the Turkish authorities since 27 December 2015 because of security concerns. Hasakah governorate also remains largely inaccessible by road for United Nations agencies from within the Syrian Arab Republic owing to insecurity and the presence of ISIL along the routes. The United Nations continues with airlifts from Damascus to Qamishli airport to deliver multisectoral assistance.

Humanitarian response

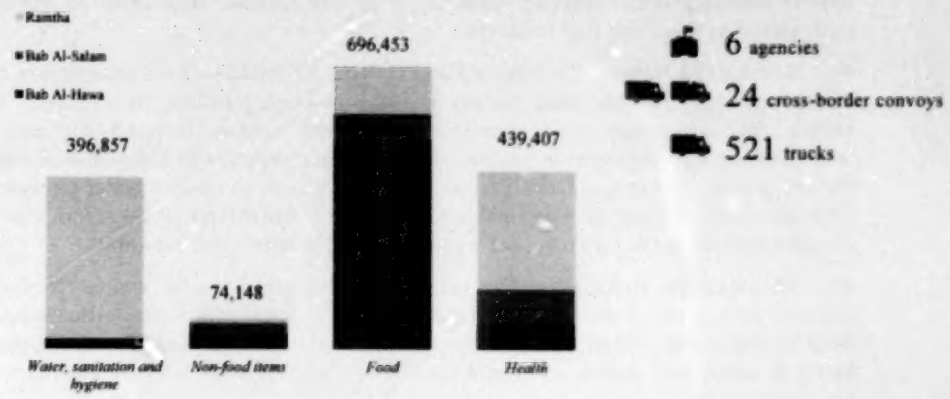
37. In March, United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need through all modalities from within the Syrian Arab Republic and across borders (see table 2). In addition to the United Nations and partners, NGOs continued to deliver valuable assistance to people in need, in line with previous months. The Government continued to provide basic services to those areas under its control and in many areas beyond its control.

Table 2
Number of people reached by United Nations organizations, March 2017

Organization	*Number of people reached*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	31 000
International Organization for Migration	N/A
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	264 000
United Nations Children's Fund	2 600 000
United Nations Development Programme	2 773 000
United Nations Population Fund	172 000
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	430 000
World Food Programme	4 100 000
World Health Organization	456 000

38. Cross-border deliveries continued from Jordan and Turkey into the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), and 2332 (2016) (see figure IV). In line with those resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including content, destination and number of beneficiaries. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations, monitoring 521 trucks used in 24 convoys by six United Nations agencies, confirming the humanitarian nature of each and notifying the Syrian authorities after each shipment. The Mechanism continued to benefit from excellent cooperation with the Governments of Jordan and Turkey.

Figure IV
Number of beneficiaries assisted by the United Nations and its partners, by cluster, through cross-border humanitarian deliveries, March 2017



39. Inter-agency convoys completed in March are listed in table 3. In total, the United Nations undertook eight inter-agency convoys, with all except the Bludan convoy as part of the March inter-agency convoy plan. In March, the logistics cluster on behalf of United Nations agencies completed 18 airdrop rotations to besieged Dayr al-Zawr city, airdropping quantities for some 42,000 people to receive a full food ration. A total of fifty-two airlift rotations to Qamishli were completed, airlifting a total of 1,975 tons of WFP food and other supplies on behalf of other humanitarian actors. Doing so enabled WFP to provide assistance for 188,550 people in the governorate of Hasakah. That assistance included 4,210 food rations sufficient to assist 21,050 Iraqi refugees from Mosul hosted in the Hawl refugee camp. Using stock airlifted to Qamishli, WFP delivered 7,300 ready-to-eat rations to Tall Abyad, Suluk and Ayn Isa in northern Raqqah governorate (under Kurdish control), providing support to 36,500 people in the area for the first time since July 2015, as well as 7,000 ready-to-eat rations for 35,000 newly displaced people in the hard-to-reach area of Manbij.

Table 3
Inter-agency cross-line humanitarian convoys, March 2017

Date	*Location*	*Requested target (number of beneficiaries)*	*Targeted people reached*	*Type of assistance*
14 March	Fu'ah and Kafraya	20 000	20 000	Multisectoral
14 March	Madaya	40 000	39 600	Multisectoral
14 March	Zabadani		400	Multisectoral
24 March	Wadi Barada	30 000	24 500	Multisectoral
27 March	Bludan	N/A	25 000	Multisectoral
27 March	Talbisah	101 500	84 500	Multisectoral
30 March	Khan al-Shih	6 000	6 000	Multisectoral
30 March	Rastan	107 500	107 500	Multisectoral

40. A national polio campaign was conducted from 12 to 16 March. Preliminary results indicate that 2.1 million of 2.7 million children under five years of age, or a coverage rate of 76.68 per cent, were vaccinated against polio from inside the Syrian Arab Republic in all governorates except Idlib, Raqqah city and part of rural

Aleppo. An additional 60,000 children in Idlib and Aleppo were reached via cross-border partners. Final coverage results will be available by the second week of April. Separately, some 9,000 children under five years of age were reached with routine immunization, including measles, in eastern Ghutah from 18 to 25 March through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

41. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) facilitated the completion of emergency repairs of the Wadi Barada and Ayn al-Fijah pipelines to Damascus to ensure adequate water production for the spring season. Support for pump rehabilitation will continue to ensure adequate water supplies to Damascus during the dry season. In Aleppo, UNICEF has supported efforts to resume water pumping from the Khafsah plant at the Euphrates River since mid-March. As a result, many neighbourhoods in the city received water through the municipal network.

42. The Russian Federation sent information bulletins to the United Nations through the Russian Centre for the Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic that outlined the provision of bilateral humanitarian assistance. Other Member States also continued to provide bilateral and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

Visas and registrations

43. A total of 40 new visa requests were submitted. Of those, a total of 11 applications were approved, none were rejected and 29 remain pending. Ten new visa requests from earlier months were approved, while 13 remain pending. A total of 75 visa renewal requests were submitted in February, of which 49 were approved and 26 remain pending. A further 11 visa renewals submitted in earlier months were also approved.

44. A total of 17 international NGOs are registered with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to operate in the country. Four more international NGOs are in the process of completing registration. Those organizations continued to face a series of administrative hurdles and restrictions that affect their ability to operate, including in gaining permission to undertake independent needs assessments. Some 216 national NGOs are authorized to operate in the Syrian Arab Republic. One national NGO in Damascus received authorization to operate during March, while one national NGO in Aleppo was removed from the list. The national NGO in Aleppo that was removed from the list was a major partner for many United Nations agencies in the city.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

45. On 5 March, two mortar shells landed 150 metres east of the Four Seasons Hotel in Damascus where United Nations staff reside, causing minor damage to a room used by WFP.

46. On 10 March, the office of one national NGO operating south-east of Idlib city was raided by a non-State armed opposition group. None of the staff were in the building at the time, but some equipment was confiscated. The raids were reportedly conducted in reaction to the NGO celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March.

47. On 13 March, one mortar landed on the UNRWA Shafa Amr collective shelter in Qabun, Damascus, causing minor damage to the building, while three more landed in the vicinity.

48. On 27 March, one Syrian Arab Red Crescent volunteer and an engineer and technicians were reportedly killed as a result of an aerial attack while at the Tabaqah dam in Raqqah to undertake an assessment to conduct repairs and stabilize the dam.

49. Since the beginning of the conflict, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed, including 21 staff members of the United Nations (of which 17 were UNRWA staff members), 65 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and 8 staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. In addition, many staff members of international and national NGOs are reported to have been killed. A total of 27 United Nations staff, including 1 United Nations Development Programme staff and 26 UNRWA area staff, are detained or currently missing.

III. Observations

50. I remain deeply troubled by the situation on the ground for civilians in many parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. Explosive weapons continue to be fired into populated areas, not only indiscriminately killing and injuring people, but also destroying and damaging housing and vital infrastructure. The building blocks of civilian life upon which ordinary Syrians depend continue to be damaged, destroyed and rendered unusable, including bakeries, water stations, hospitals, schools and places of worship. As a result, civilians continue to bear the brunt of this crisis each and every day.

51. Humanitarian deliveries continue to be prevented from reaching the large number of people who desperately need help. I am concerned about the rise in administrative and other bureaucratic restrictions by all parties on the ground, including the Syrian authorities and non-State armed groups and others in Idlib, as well as local authorities in north-eastern Syria. I salute the tireless efforts of United Nations humanitarian agencies, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, ICRC and international and national NGOs on the ground. They continue to ensure that millions of people receive assistance each month in a difficult and high-risk environment. Humanitarians stand ready to scale up these efforts but this requires all parties to genuinely facilitate the work.

52. I note the recent evacuations from the besieged neighbourhood of Wa'r in Homs city as part of a local agreement between the Government and local representatives in Wa'r. The United Nations has not been involved in the negotiations or evacuations around such agreements, which do not appear to meet international legal standards or adhere to humanitarian principles. The United Nations has repeatedly expressed its concern at any local agreement that is preceded by the decimation of an area and results in the forced displacement of some parts of the civilian population. I would like to remind parties involved in such agreements that, under international humanitarian law, the forced displacement of civilians for reasons relating to the conflict is permissible solely in order to guarantee their security or for imperative military necessity. Forced displacement for any other reason relating to the conflict is prohibited and may constitute a war crime. Any evacuation of civilians must be safe, voluntary and to a place of their choosing. Parties must treat those leaving with dignity and without fear of harm. Those displaced must be allowed to return voluntarily to their homes as soon as the situation allows.

53. Round five of the political negotiations in Geneva progressed towards obvious points of commonality between invitees on the basis of the discussions around the agreed agenda, not least of which was the assertion by all present that there should be no constitutional or security vacuum as a negotiated political transition is implemented. This was an important step and represents a deepening of the process to include the emergence of other points of commonalities and a greater understanding of what is required if a political transitional process is to be

successfully negotiated among Syrians in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué.

54. The steady work undertaken by the invitees should not be underestimated or dismissed. It is precisely what is required if they are to move further along the track to a political solution through dialogue to peace. It is therefore significant that, at the end of the negotiations, they evinced a willingness to intensify consultations with the United Nations between negotiations so that further progress may be made during the next round as quickly as possible to solve the conflict in the country. Accordingly, notwithstanding the worrying situation on the ground and the likely continuance of adverse incidents, invitees demonstrated a new maturity and commitment to continuing the process notwithstanding all the political and military difficulties.

55. The United Nations continues to call for an adherence to and strengthening of the ceasefire and continued engagement to ensure that humanitarian aid is received by those most in need. The linkages between the ceasefire, humanitarian access and political progress remain a reality. While I am confident that progress can be made in Geneva, I remain concerned that the scope for success in the political process can be undermined by the deteriorating reality on the ground, which has an impact on civilians more than any actor. I continue to call upon parties on the ground to commit to the protection of civilians and to continue to engage on political, military and humanitarian tracks, with a view to ending this conflict.

Annex

Incidents affecting civilians recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, March 2017[a]

Rif Dimashq and Damascus governorates

- On 2 March, one civilian was reportedly killed by a ground-based strike in opposition-held Madaya.
- On 2 March, one civilian was reportedly killed and several wounded in air strikes that hit a residential area of a non-State armed opposition group-controlled part of Harasta.
- On 3 March, one civilian was reportedly killed in air strikes that hit a residential area of non-State armed opposition group-controlled Irbin.
- On 5 March, one civilian was allegedly killed in ground-based strikes on non-State armed opposition-held Duma.
- On 7 March, two civilians, including one child, were allegedly killed in air strikes on the part of Harasta held by non-State armed opposition groups.
- On 9 March, a series of ground-based strikes hit a residential area in non-State armed opposition group-held Hammurah, resulting in the alleged death of five civilians, including two women and one child, and injuries to an unknown number of others.
- On 11 March, two consecutive explosions were reported in the area of Bab al-Saghir, in the district of Shaghur in central Damascus, allegedly killing at least 40 people and injuring more than 120 others, including Iraqi citizens, according to pro-government sources. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received a list of 16 names of members of Syrian security forces who were allegedly killed in the attack but was unable to independently confirm the number of civilians killed.
- On 12 March, one civilian woman was allegedly killed and another woman and her two children injured owing to ground-based strikes on opposition-held Buqayn.
- On 15 March, one civilian was reportedly shot by a sniper in Buqayn on 14 March. He was among the four civilians evacuated to Damascus. However, he died from his injuries on 17 March.
- On 15 March, two successive explosions occurred in government-held Damascus: one inside the Palace of Justice in the central area of Hamidiyah and the other in a restaurant in the Rawda neighbourhood. In the first incident, OHCHR received a list of 13 lawyers who were reportedly killed in the blast but was unable to confirm the total number of civilian casualties. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for the two attacks through an online media outlet known to be affiliated with them. The number of civilian casualties caused by the second explosion is unknown.

[a] In line with resolution 2258 (2015), the present description of developments on the ground, and the incidents during the month that OHCHR has been able to corroborate, relates to the compliance with resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The information is provided without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Cessation of Hostilities of the International Syria Support Group. The reporting is not a comprehensive listing of all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law that took place in the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period.

- On 16 March, one 15-year-old boy was reportedly shot in the head by a sniper and severely wounded. He survived but was reportedly in urgent need of surgery.
- On 16 March, one child was allegedly hit in the head by sniper fire in the vicinity of the Hezbollah-run Shabak checkpoint in Madaya.
- On 18 March, one man with a mental disability was allegedly shot dead by a sniper near the Hezbollah-run Bin al-Shaikh checkpoint. One of his relatives, who tried to rescue him, was also struck by sniper fire and reportedly died on 20 March.
- On 19 March, a market in Irbin was hit by ground-based strikes, allegedly killing five civilians, including one child.
- On 19 March, four members of a local humanitarian group were allegedly killed in an air strike as they were rescuing civilians following a previous air strike in non-State armed opposition group-held Jawbar.
- On 19 March, one child was allegedly killed by sniper fire in the vicinity of the Hezbollah-run Abd al-Majid checkpoint. Another civilian was allegedly shot in the head by a sniper that same day, near the same checkpoint, and died on 21 March. One civilian who tried to help him was also reportedly shot and died two days later.
- On 19 March, one civilian man was reportedly killed as a result of being shot dead by a sniper near the Bin al-Sheikh checkpoint.
- On 20 March, air strikes reportedly killed two civilians, including one child, and injured 15 others in non-State armed opposition group-held Hammurah.
- On 22 March, two civilians were allegedly injured owing to ground-based strikes on the residential area of Sha'alan, in the centre of Damascus.
- On 25 March, an airstrike hit Rawda and Baladia streets, in Hammurah, eastern Ghutah, reportedly killing 18 civilians, including 7 women and 3 children, and injuring 70 others, including 25 children and 20 women. The impact reportedly damaged or destroyed some 90 houses, 35 shops and 1 mosque.

Dar'a governorate

- On 1 March, in the village of Al-Qusayr, the ISIL-affiliated Khalid ibn al-Walid Army allegedly executed a 40-year-old woman for alleged "blasphemy" after reportedly depriving her of her liberty for 16 days.
- On 7 March, one child was allegedly killed by an air strike on the non-State armed opposition group-held town of Sahwa in rural eastern Dar'a.
- On 10 March, three civilians, including two women, were allegedly killed in ground-based strikes launched on the government-held area of Sahhari and in the vicinity of the airport.
- On 11 March, one civilian was reportedly killed in a ground-based strike on the non-State armed opposition group-held village of Eastern Ghariyah.
- On 12 March, one civilian was reportedly killed and six others injured in a ground-based strike conducted on the government-controlled part of Dar'a city.

- On 12 March, one doctor treating the wounded near the front line was allegedly killed in an air strike on the non-State armed opposition group-held area of Dar'a Al-Balad, Dar'a city.
- On 13 March, one medical worker and his wife were reportedly killed in an air strike on the non-State armed opposition group-held area of Tariq al-Sadd.
- On 14 March, a civilian woman was reportedly killed in an air strike on the non-State armed opposition group-held town of Sayda in eastern rural Dar'a.
- On 14 March, one child was reportedly killed owing to ground-based strikes on the government-controlled Dar'a neighbourhood of Sahhari. Another child was reportedly killed on the same day in ground-based strikes on the eastern part of the Dar'a Al-Balad area held by non-State armed opposition groups .
- On 17 March, one civilian was reportedly publicly executed in Tasil by the Khalid ibn al-Walid Army for alleged "blasphemy".
- On 18 March, one civilian living in Tasil was reportedly killed by ground-based strikes.
- On 20 March, one civilian was allegedly killed by an improvised explosive device close to the city of Khabab in northern Dar'a.
- On 20 March, two civil defence members were reportedly killed as their car hit an explosive device in the non-State armed opposition group-held area of Al-Mukhayyam
- On 21 March, two hors de combat fighters from the city of Nawa were reportedly executed by Khalid ibn al-Walid Army in the area of Tall al-Shatara. They had allegedly been kidnapped several months earlier.

Aleppo governorate

- On 4 March, air strikes hit residential areas in the ISIL-controlled district of Khafsah, near Manbij, reportedly killing four civilians from one family and injuring three others.
- On 6 March, four civilians, including one woman and one child, were allegedly killed when an explosive device went off at the outskirts of Khafsah town in eastern rural Aleppo.
- On 11 March, three civilians were allegedly killed as a result of an explosive device that detonated in Bab town.
- On 14 March, four civilians were allegedly killed when an explosive device detonated while they were walking in Bab town in eastern rural Aleppo. While OHCHR cannot determine who planted the device, ISIL has been known to plant such explosives in areas under its control, in particular before withdrawing.
- On 20 March, one woman was killed and her three children injured when air strikes hit residential areas in non-State armed opposition group-held Ma'rat al-Atarib in western rural Aleppo.
- On 22 March, government-allied militias broke in and appropriated empty houses of civilians in the Sayf al-Dawlah neighbourhood of Aleppo city. Reports indicated that those responsible claimed that the owners of the houses were absent and could have fled the country.
- On 23 March, ground-based strikes hit the government-controlled 3000 housing project in the Hamdaniyah area of Aleppo city. The facility reportedly

hosted many displaced persons from other areas of Aleppo. Five children were allegedly killed in the strikes — four girls between 8 and 13 years of age and one boy — and at least three other children were injured. The children were playing in the street when more than seven mortar rounds fell on the area.

Idlib governorate

- On 5 March, air strikes hit residential areas in Kafr Nubl, south of Idlib, reportedly killing 6 civilians, including 1 child, and injuring 17 others, including 1 reporters and 1 news editor at the local Radio Fresh. An on-duty civil defence volunteer was also injured during the attack.
- On 9 March, air strikes hit residential areas of Kafr Nubl, allegedly killing five civilians, including three children and one woman. The school of Fadhl al-Khatib, considered the largest in the area, was hit and damaged.
- On 9 March, two children were reportedly killed when a missile that had failed to explode on impact later detonated in Jisr al-Shughur.
- On 15 March, several air strikes hit a residential area of Idlib city, allegedly killing 25 civilians, including 14 children and 6 women. Most of the victims were reportedly displaced persons from Bab.
- On 16 March, one civilian was reportedly killed and another injured as a result of an explosion of an improvised explosive device on the road between Tallmannis and Jarjanaz in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man.
- On 18 March, ground-based strikes hit the besieged town of Fu'ah, allegedly injuring three civilians, including one woman.
- On 19 March, several air strikes hit residential areas in Idlib city, reportedly killing five civilians, including two children and two women, and injuring an unknown number of others. The victims were reportedly internally displaced persons from northern rural Homs.
- On 19 March, air strikes hit residential areas in the eastern neighbourhood of Khan Shaykhum city, allegedly killing eight civilians, including three children and their mother. One of the victims was a displaced person from northern Hama.
- On 19 March, air strikes hit Arba'in street, in Idlib city, reportedly killing at least five civilians, including three children and one woman.
- On 22 March, air strikes hit residential areas in the western neighbourhood of Jisr al-Shughur, allegedly killing four civilians and injuring five others, and an on-duty civil defence volunteer. On the same day, other air strikes hit residential areas of Jisr al-Shughur, injuring three children.
- On 24 March, air strikes hit residential areas of Urum al-Jawz in Ariha, reportedly killing one woman and her child.
- On 24 March, air strikes hit residential areas in Khan Shaykhum, allegedly killing two male civilians.
- On 24 March, air strikes hit a court and prison complex run by Jaish Al-Fatah in Idlib city, reportedly killing at least 15 detainees, including 7 women from Fu'ah.
- On 24 March, more air strikes hit residential areas in Idlib city, allegedly killing two male civilians.

- On 25 March, air strikes hit residential areas in Khan Shaykhum, reportedly killing eight civilians, including two women and two children. Some of the victims were reportedly internally displaced persons from Hama.
- On 25 March, air strikes allegedly hit the surgical hospital of Kafr Nubl, putting the facility out of service.
- On 25 March, air strikes hit the Faculty of Education at Idlib University, allegedly injuring one female student.
- On 28 March, air strikes hit residential areas in Jisr al-Shughur, allegedly killing five civilians, including two women. Four of the victims were from the same family.
- On 29 March, air strikes hit residential areas in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, striking the Caliph Umar bin Abdul aziz shrine and a bakery. The strikes allegedly killed 8 civilians, including 6 children, and injured at least 20 others and caused material damage to the shrine.

Hama governorate

- On 25 March, air strikes hit an underground surgical hospital in non-State armed opposition group-held Lataminah city, reportedly killing two civilians, including one doctor who was performing surgery, and injuring 32 others, including 16 medical workers. OHCHR received reports that toxic agents may have been used in the attack. Although the attack did not cause significant damage to the hospital, the facility was closed for a few days, given that some equipment was reportedly damaged. Two ambulances were reportedly destroyed.
- On 25 March, several air strikes hit residential areas of Lataminah and its outskirts, reportedly killing three civilians, two women and one child and injuring an unknown number of others.
- On 25 March, one child was killed and two others severely injured while they were grazing sheep in Al-Azwar, south of Lataminah.
- On 28 March, air strikes hit a medical centre in non-State armed opposition group-held Kafr Nabudah, north of Hama, reportedly injuring one medical worker and causing extensive material damage.
- On 30 March, air strikes hit residential areas in non-State armed opposition group-held Lataminah, reportedly injuring several civilians. OHCHR spoke to a doctor at the hospital where victims were treated who reported that symptoms indicated that a chemical agent may have been used.

Homs governorate

- On 1 March, ground-based strikes hit non-State armed opposition group-controlled Talbisah, north of Homs, reportedly killing one woman.
- On 1 March, ground-based strikes hit non-State armed opposition group-controlled Wa'r, allegedly killing one civilian and injuring an undetermined number of others.
- On 2 March, strikes on Wa'r allegedly killed 2 civilians and injured 30 others.
- On 3 March, ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Wa'r, reportedly killing two civilians and injuring others.
- On 4 March, air strikes hit residential areas in Wa'r, allegedly killing 5 civilians and injuring at least 20 others.

- On 6 March, air strikes hit residential areas in Wa'r, reportedly killing 2 civilians and injuring 17 others. Furthermore, on 6 March, ground-based strikes hit residential areas in the government-controlled Ghutah neighbourhood of Homs, allegedly killing a number of civilians.

- On 14 March, an improvised explosive device placed underneath a bus exploded in the government-controlled Wadi-al-Dhahab neighbourhood southeast of Homs city, reportedly injuring seven civilians.

Hasakah governorate

- On 2 March, a young civilian man was allegedly shot and killed by Turkish border guards while he was overseeing grazing sheep in the rural town of Malikiyah. He was originally from Qasr al-Dib village in rural Hasakah.

Dayr al-Zawr governorate

- On 8 March, at approximately 13:30, air strikes on ISIL-controlled Mayadin town, eastern rural Dayr al-Zawr, reportedly hit several residential locations in Jaish street, close to the Baladiya bakery, two civilian houses and the Abdul Jabbar al-Obaid school, which was hosting internally displaced persons. At least 23 civilians were reportedly killed and several others injured. Three of those allegedly killed were from Mayadin, while the rest were displaced Iraqi nationals.

- On 15 March, ground-based strikes hit residential areas of ISIL-controlled Hamidiyah neighbourhood of Dayr al-Zawr city, allegedly killing at least eight civilians from one family, including two women and a three-day-old infant girl.

- On 15 March, one woman was reportedly killed when a ground-based strike hit a residential area of the government-held Jurah neighbourhood of Dayr al-Zawr city.

- On 17 March, ISIL reportedly publicly executed by firing squad six captive fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces in Karamah town.

- On 18 March, ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Jurah and Qusur neighbourhoods of Dayr al-Zawr city, reportedly injuring four civilians.

Raqqah governorate

- On 8 March, at least 14 civilians were reportedly killed, including 4 women and 6 children, when air strikes hit residential areas of ISIL-controlled Matabb Albu Rashid village, eastern rural Raqqah.

- On 16 March, ISIL fighters deprived six male civilians of their liberty on the ground that they had smuggled civilians to areas outside ISIL control. The men were reportedly taken from their homes in various neighbourhoods of Raqqah city. Their whereabouts remained unknown at the time of writing the present report.

- On 17 March, another three men were allegedly held by ISIL fighters on the same ground in Tabaqah town, western rural Raqqah.

- On 17 March, one woman was reportedly killed and seven other civilians, including one woman, injured when fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces opened fire on their minibus close to Khass Hibal and Khass Ujayl villages in rural Raqqah. Originally from those villages, the civilians have been displaced and were reportedly trying to return to their homes.

- On 19 March, air strikes hit residential areas in ISIL-controlled Mazra'at al-Andalus village, in western rural Raqqah, reportedly killing 14 civilians, including 2 women and 5 children, and injuring at least 23 others.
- On 19 March, five children were reportedly killed when an explosive device detonated close to them while they were playing near the closed Gharbiyah school in Huzaymah town in northern rural Raqqah.
- On 20 March, airstrikes hit various residential areas of Tabaqah town, including Shari' al-Arid, Furn al-Ali and houses near the Kanisah roundabout, reportedly killing 16 civilians, including 6 women and 3 children, and injuring 52 others.
- On 21 March, near Mansurah town, western rural Raqqah, air strikes hit Badiya school, which was hosting displaced persons from Tadmur (Palmyra) and Homs for the past three years. Reports indicated that there were at least 25 to 30 internally displaced families in the school at the time of the incident. According to initial reports, at least 46 civilians were killed, including women and children, and many others were injured.
- On 22 March, air strikes reportedly hit a bakery and adjacent local market in Al-Hay al-Thani (the second neighbourhood) of Tabaqah. Initial reports indicated that at least 37 civilians had been killed, including 5 women and 2 children, and 52 others injured. Sources on the ground claimed that no ISIL installations/personnel were present at the time of the attacks.
- On 27 March, initial reports indicate that the manager of the Tabaqah dam engineering team and his technical assistant were allegedly killed and at least three other employees injured when air strikes hit close to the dam.
- On 30 March, air strikes carried out at dawn on ISIL-controlled Mansurah village in western rural Raqqah hit a civilian house, reportedly killing a mother and her four children aged between three months and 7 years and injuring the father.

United Nations S/2017/340

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 April 2017

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the representative of Kazakhstan on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 18 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations stating that Mr. Akan Rakhmetullin, Director General for Multilateral Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will represent Kazakhstan at the 7926th meeting of the Security Council, to be held on 18 April 2017.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

17-06284 (E) 200417

Please recycle

United Nations S/2017/341

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 April 2017

Original: English

Identical letters dated 19 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the following reliable and serious information:

After the American aggression on the Syrian airbase of Sha'irat on 7 April 2017, an agreement was reached between the military and intelligence services of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United States and Israel, which meet within the framework of the so-called "Military Operations Command" in Jordan (channelling Western and Gulf aid to terrorist armed groups in southern Syria), to escalate tension in the southern region of Syria and prepare the terrain for creating so-called "safe zones" there. Accordingly, the Saudi regime issued instructions to the terrorist group Jaysh al-Islam (Army of Islam), operating in the countryside of Damascus, to prepare for chemical strikes on the capital and on a number of areas in Damascus suburbs, including Irbin, Harasta, Duma, Zamalka and Utaya.

Based on those Saudi instructions, several senior leaders of terrorist armed groups met in a building that was the premises of Hamdan Hospital, in the countryside of Damascus, to develop the targeting plan. The toxic chemicals are now prepared at the Duma National Hospital, which is occupied by these terrorist groups.

The main immediate goal of planning once again for the use of toxic chemicals by terrorist armed groups is to falsely accuse the Syrian Arab Army of doing it and to create a new and similar pretext for the United States Administration to once again commit a military aggression against Syria.

The competent Syrian authorities, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have received several contacts from a number of United Nations organizations working in Damascus, expressing their concerns about the news transmitted through mass media and social media on this serious issue.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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United Nations S/2017/342

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 April 2017

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the alternate representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 18 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations stating that Mr. David Kinna has been appointed alternate representative of the United Kingdom on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

17-06296 (E) 200417

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United Nations S/2017/343

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 April 2017

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the representative of France on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 5 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations stating that Mrs. Sheraz Gasri has been appointed alternate representative of France on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

17-06289 (E) 200417

Please recycle

United Nations S/2017/344

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 April 2017

Original: English

Identical letters dated 20 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instruction from my Government, I have the honour to attach herewith a list detailing the numbers of civilians killed or injured, in addition to losses inflicted on infrastructure and public and private property, by mortar shells launched by terrorist armed groups against peaceful neighbourhoods and civilians in the city of Damascus and its suburbs, during the period from 8 to 16 April 2017.

8 April 2017

Location of impact	*No. of mortar shells*	*No. of people killed or wounded*
Qabun neighbourhood	5	3 dead
		9 wounded
Panorama area	3	2 wounded

9 April 2017

No incidents were recorded.

10 April 2017

Location of impact	*No. of mortar shells*	*No. of people killed or wounded*
Vicinity of the Syronics company	3	2 dead
		4 wounded
Near the Abbasiyin bus station	1	–
Masakin Barzah	1	2 dead
		9 wounded

11 April 2017

Location of impact	*No. of mortar shells*	*No. of people killed or wounded*
King Faysal street	1	7 wounded
Bab Sharqi wall	1	2 wounded
Kabbas area	1	1 dead
		5 wounded

12 April 2017

Location of impact	*No. of mortar shells*	*No. of people killed or wounded*
Military Sports Union Stadium	1	8 wounded

13 April 2017

Location of impact	*No. of mortar shells*	*No. of people killed or wounded*
Abbasiyin area	1	2 wounded
Qassa' area	2	2 dead
		12 wounded

14 April 2017

Location of impact	*No. of mortar shells*	*No. of people killed or wounded*
Jaramana area	2	1 dead
		6 wounded
Kabbas bridge	6	7 wounded
Wafidin Camp	3	2 dead
		11 wounded
Ush al-Wurur area	1	1 dead
		5 wounded
Sports club in the Rukn al-Din neighbourhood	1	3 wounded
Jewish quarter in Shaghur neighbourhood	2	1 dead
		7 wounded

15 April 2017

Location of impact	*No. of mortar shells*	*No. of people killed or wounded*
Assad suburb	4	2 dead
		8 wounded

16 April 2017

Location of impact	*No. of mortar shells*	*No. of people killed or wounded*
Umayyad Square and the neighbouring area	3	4 dead
		9 wounded
Total	**21 dead**	**116 wounded**

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative